

PM tells bumi traders to go for open market

SUN - 7 AUG 2002

PETALING JAYA: Bumiputra entrepreneurs must stop depending solely on the government to buy their products because such a market is limited and not the right way to do business, P&e Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said bumiputra entrepreneurs must focus on the open market, that is the real market, which can help them improve quality and demand for their goods.

"I find that bumiputra entrepreneurs appear to need assurances that the government will buy their products and this is not 100% business," he said when opening the two-day National Women Entrepreneurs Convention.

Mahathir said that although this way of doing business is risk-free and did not require efficient management, it would not help the development of an enterprise.

Later, at a media conference, he said 100% of bumiputra contractors depend on government contracts and "are not competitive enough" in the absence of such contracts.

Mahathir also touched on the lack of locally-produced souvenirs at tourist centres because of the inability of local manufacturers to mass produce such items.

"I am sad that at tourist spots like those in Pulau Langkawi, souvenirs sold

are made mostly in Thailand, Taiwan, China and the Philippines," he said.

"You cannot find anything that is made in Malaysia."

Mahathir said manufacturers of souvenirs and handicraft items must switch from traditional methods which depend on individual

skills to machines which can mass produce.

The government will also revive the "one village one product" project for small industries in villages which have been earmarked, he said.

The project would have full-time workers using machines to ensure that

goods produced are of high quality and fulfil demand.

Mahathir said this type of project, which was started in Japan, had proven successful in Thailand.

Among the goods which will be produced are machine-embroidered towels which are in demand locally, he said.